

BEFORE THE
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268

In the Matter of:

Gepp Arkansas 72538
Post Office State ZIP Code

Docket No: A2011-60

Mary Rivera + Kathy Adams Petitioner(s)
Committee to Save Gepp Postoffice + Concerned Patrons of Gepp Post office

PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

1. Petitioner(s) are appealing the Postal Service's Final Determination concerning the Gepp post office. The Final Determination was posted Aug 04, 2011.
(date)

2. In accordance with applicable law, 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(5), the Petitioner(s) request the Postal Regulatory Commission to review the Postal Service's determination on the basis of the record before the Postal Service in the making of the determination.

3. Petitioners: Please set out below the reasons why you believe the Postal Service's Final Determination should be reversed and returned to the Postal Service for further consideration. (See pages of the Instructions for an outline of the kinds of reasons the law requires us to consider.) Please be as specific as possible. Please continue on additional paper if you need more space and attach the additional page(s) to this form.

See attached documents pages 1 - 12

We the petitioners to save Gepp Post Office are thankful to be heard by an unbiased Commission on our behalf.

We believe that due process was not provided at this facility.

We feel that the postal service did not give full consideration on the study of closing Gepp Post Office with information being inaccurate and incomplete.

In the Final Determination letter it was stated that this office was up for study for the reasons of: Post Office vacant, postal rental property has been foreclosed, declining economy and declining population.

In discussion of each:

Post office being vacant: The post master position was never posted. We have been running smoothly with the local OIC at a reduced cost for the postal service.

Postal rental property being foreclosed: It is our understanding that the financial institution has gained control of the property and is maintaining the lease agreement. There was no eviction notice or plans of eviction. The lease agreement expiration date is Aug 31, 2017.

Declining economy: The economy is an issue worldwide. If the post office is going to make it less convenient for people to use their services that certainly will not help to increase revenue.

Declining population: In talking with our Gepp Volunteer Fire Department it does not appear that our population has decreased in this area. In fact, they are in the process of working on adding two substations to help with the coverage area. In investigating this, we found that in 2009 there were some Gepp addresses changed to Elizabeth and then in 2011 some Gepp addresses were changed to Henderson. So it would look like our population is decreasing by the postal service records for our area, however that is not so.

The figures on the Final Determination letter states that in closing this office there would be an annual savings of:

Postmaster Salary (EAS-11, No COLA)	\$33,168.00
Fringe Benefits @ 33.5%	\$11,111.00
Annual Lease Costs	<u>\$ 1,200.00</u>
Total Annual Costs	\$45,479.00

These figures are not full financial disclosure because they were not paying a Post Master so the salary and fringe benefits would not be accurate. There was no revenue considered in the report. We believe revenue will decrease in retail and post office boxes when patrons have to travel further.

The mileage between post offices is different depending on which report you read, one report states 6 miles another states 7 it is actually closer to 8. It is not a big difference but is not correct. For most patrons it will be at least 14-20 miles round trip to travel to the Viola post office to pick up their mail. With the price of gas we do not feel that most patrons will drive the extra mileage.

The concern of some of the patrons was mail theft and vandalism and the worry of leaving cash in the rural mailbox for stamps and money orders. The answer was to have a locking mailbox with a slot big enough to accommodate our mail flow. If the slot is big enough to get small packages like medicine and such then a hand will also fit in the slot. The other concern is, if the box is locked the mail carrier will not be able to get the outgoing mail or cash for stamps and money orders out of the box.

For patrons that need to mail items heavier than a letter or need to use other services will still need to go to the post office which would be further away. Rural box customers should not be asked to wait at the highway for a person to provide services nor should they have to drive so far out of their way.

We do not feel that the questionnaires were really evaluated. It was quite obvious in reading all of them that the majority of the patrons go the opposite direction to work and do their business. There are approx 8 patrons that said they go to Salem to do the majority of the shopping, work and etc. Then approx 61 patrons say they go to Mountain Home. That is the opposite direction of the Viola post office. Although they would be passing the Henderson post office on the way to Mtn Home and could get money orders or mail packages, but to pick up a package or receive a certified letter could be a big problem for people who work in Mtn Home due to the fact they will not be able to get to Viola during business hours.

This is definitely a negative effect on our community!

We understand that it would not be justifiable to keep all small post offices in operation but we do feel that Gepp Post Office has not received full consideration on this matter. Gepp Post office is not "out in the county". It is located on US Hwy 62, a major highway thru Arkansas.

If people living in the rural areas are inconvenienced enough they will move to the cities leaving NO ONE to raise the food that can only be raised in the rural areas. The long term result being less food.

Section 101(b) of Title 39, USC S404 clearly states – "The Postal Service shall provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal service to rural areas, and small towns where post offices are not self-sustaining. No small post office shall be closed solely for operating at a deficit, it being the specific intent of the Congress that effective postal services be insured to residents of both urban and rural communities." How much more specific does Congress have to be?!!!

NO FARMERS - NO FOOD

The google map that was included in the paperwork for the study dated 12/02/2010 does not have us located in the correct place. Therefore the mileage between offices in the surrounding area could not be correct.

post office 72538 - Google Maps

Page 1 of 2

Google maps

DOCKET NO.

ITEM NO.

PAGE

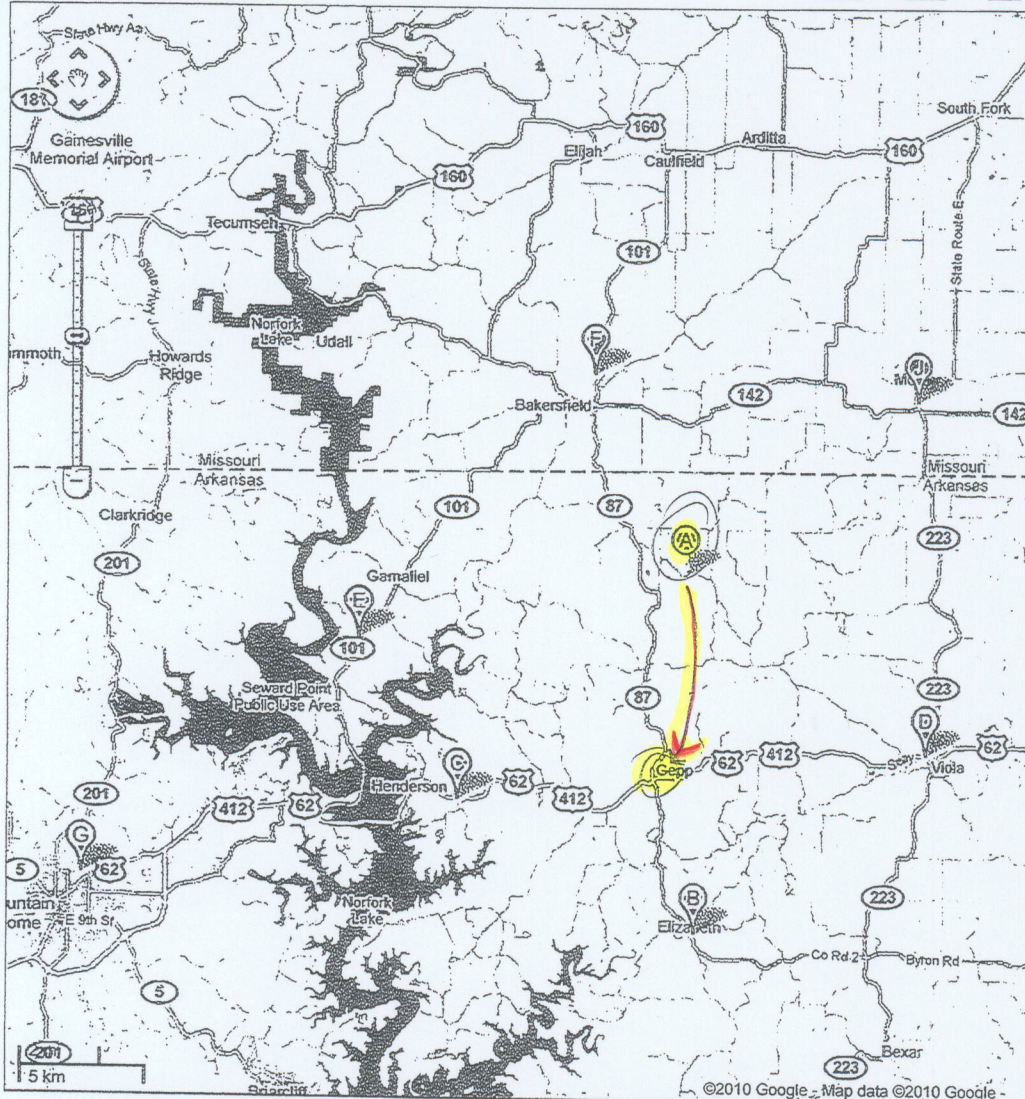
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[Get Directions](#) [My Maps](#)

[Print](#) [Send](#) [Link](#)



[Local Post Offices](#) - [yellowpages.com](#) - Find local post offices & postal services at [YELLOWPAGES.COM](#)

A. US Post Office

17971 Highway 62 W, Gepp, AR -
(870) 458-2003
1 review

B. US Post Office

4506 Elizabeth Road, Elizabeth, AR -
(870) 458-2093
1 review

The Postmaster workload information dated 2/04/2011 #19 & #20 should be Yes instead of No.

PS Form 150, Postmaster Workload Information

Docket 1364672
Page Nbr 8

Post Office, State & Zip Code GEPP, AR 72538		Postmaster's Signature KP1PKD	Date 02/04/2011
District Office, State & Zip Code ARKANSAS PFC, AR 72205		District Manager's Signature KRGFT	Date 01/31/2011
(Check Box) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vacancy <input type="checkbox"/> Management Review <input type="checkbox"/> RFR		See Instructions on Reverse	
1.	Current Office Level		11
2.	Finance Number	(1-6)	043438
3.	General Delivery Families Served	(7-9)	0
4.	Post Office Boxes/Call Boxes Rented	(10-15)	41
5.	Possible City Deliveries	(16-20)	0
6.	Administrative Rural Boxes Served	(21-25)	0
7.	Intermediate Rural Boxes Served	(26-30)	0
8.	Administrative Responsibility form Intermediate Rural Boxes for Other Offices	(31-35)	0
9.	Administrative Highway Contract/Star Route Boxes Served	(36-39)	189
10.	Intermediate Highway Contract/Star Route Boxes Served	(40-43)	0
11.	Administrative Responsibility for Intermediate Highway Contract/Star Route Boxes for Other Offices	(44-47)	0
12.	Number of Carrier Stations/Branches	(48-49)	0
13.	Number of Finance Stations/Branches	(50-51)	0
14.	Number of Contract Stations/Branches & Community Post Offices	(52-53)	0
15a.	Does Office Experience A Seasonal Workload? (box one "Y" of yes, "N" for no) (If you answer "yes" of this question, complete 'Seasonal Workload' section on reverse.)	(54)	N
15b.	Duration of Experience A Seasonal Workload? (minimum of 8 weeks)	(55-56)	0
16.	Does Office Perform Outgoing Distribution for Other Offices?	(57)	N
17.	Does Office Perform Incoming Distribution for Other Offices?	(58)	N
18.	Does Office Perform Incoming Secondary Distribution for Other Offices?	(59)	N
19.	Do You Separate All Incoming Letter Size Mail to City & Rural Carrier Routes for Your Own Office?	(60)	N
20.	Do You Separate All Incoming Flat Size Mail to City & Rural Carrier Routes for Your Own Office?	(61)	N
21.	Do You Have Responsibility for Vehicle Maintenance Facilities?	(62)	N
22.	Does Your Office Have Administrative Responsibility for an Air Transfer Office?	(63)	N
23.	Is Postmaster Lessor for Government Owned Building?	(64)	N
24.	Does Office Have MPLSM/SPLSM?	(65)	N
25.	Does Office Distribute Food Stamps?	(65)	N

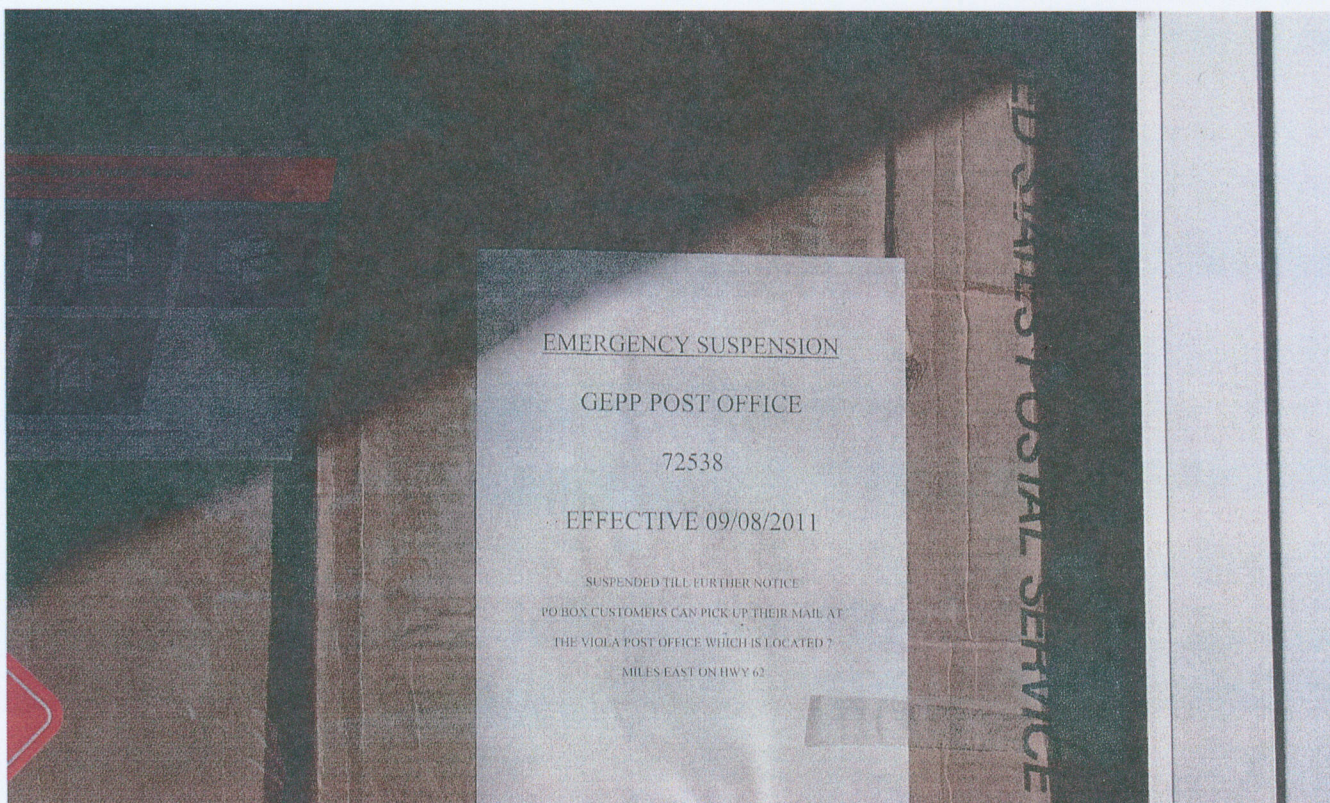
The fact sheet dated 3/09/2011 does not list any Churches or Organizations in our service area. We do have 2 churches, Crossroads Church of Christ and County Line Baptist Church. Gepp Volunteer Fire Dept would be an organization in this area.

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U.S. Postal Service POST OFFICE CLOSING OR CONSOLIDATION PROPOSAL Fact Sheet				1. Date Prepared 03/09/2011																								
2. Post Office Name GEPP		3. State and ZIP + 4 Code AR, 72538-9998																										
4. District, Customer Service ARKANSAS PFC	5. Area, Customer Service SOUTHWEST	6. County FULTON	7. Congressional District AR01																									
8. Reason for Proposal to Discontinue Post Office is vacant, postal rental property has been foreclosed, declining economy and declining population in Gepp. This office earns 1.9 hrs per day.		9. PO Emergency Suspend (Reason and Date) No Suspension		10. Proposed Permanent Alternate Service																								
11. Staffing		12. Hours of Service																										
a. <input type="checkbox"/> PM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PM Vacancy Reason & Date: retired Occupied 10/01/2009 b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OIC <input type="checkbox"/> Career <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Career c. Current PM POSITION Level (150)EAS-11 Downgraded from EAS-11 d. No of Clerks- 0 No of Career- 0 No of Non-Career- 0 e. No of Others- 1 No of Career- 0 No of Non-Career- 1		a. Time M-F 08:00 - 12:00, 12:30 - 16:15 Sat 09:00 - 10:00 Total Window Hours Per Week a. Lobby Time M-F 8:00 - 16:15 Sat 9:00 - 10:00 37.25																										
13. Number of Customers Served		14. Daily Volume (Pieces)																										
a. General Delivery 0 b. P.O. Box 41 c. City Delivery 0 d. Rural Delivery 0 e. Highway Contract Route Box 189 f. Total 230 g. No. Receiving Duplicate Service 5 h. Average No. Daily Transactions 13.60		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Types of Mail</th> <th>Received</th> <th>Dispatched</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>a. First-Class</td> <td>511</td> <td>250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. Newspaper</td> <td>131</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. Parcel</td> <td>12</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. Other</td> <td>4</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. Total</td> <td>658</td> <td>255</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. No. of Postage Meters</td> <td></td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. No. of Permits</td> <td></td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Types of Mail	Received	Dispatched	a. First-Class	511	250	b. Newspaper	131	0	c. Parcel	12	5	d. Other	4	0	e. Total	658	255	f. No. of Postage Meters		0	g. No. of Permits		0
Types of Mail	Received	Dispatched																										
a. First-Class	511	250																										
b. Newspaper	131	0																										
c. Parcel	12	5																										
d. Other	4	0																										
e. Total	658	255																										
f. No. of Postage Meters		0																										
g. No. of Permits		0																										
15. Finances a. FY		Receipts 2008 \$ 32,609 2009 \$ 21,431 2010 \$ 19,216																										
		b. EAS Step 1 PM Basic Salary (no Cola) \$ 33168 c. PM Fringe Benefits (33.5% of b.) \$11,111																										
16a. Quarters																												
<input type="checkbox"/> Postal Owned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leased (if Leased, Expiration Date) 03/31/2017 Annual Lease \$ 1200 30-day cancellation clause? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Evicted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (if Yes, must vacate by) Located in: <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Home <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Suitable alternate quarters available? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No																												
16b. Explain: the modular building site has been foreclosed - no eviction date as yet																												
17. Schools, Churches and Organization in Service Area: No: 0		19. Administrative/Emanating Office (Proposed):																										
		Name VIOLA PO EAS Level 16 Miles Away 6.0 Window Service Hours: M-F 07:30 16:00 SAT 09:00 11:00 Lobby Hours: M-F 24 hrs SAT 24 hrs PO Boxes Available: 66																										
18. Businesses in Service Area: No: 35		20. Nearest Post Office (if different from above):																										
Alsteel, Renfro Cons., Union Glass, Renfro Backhoe Serv., Avon-C. Duncan, Scensation Candles-K. Breen, Bathe in Beauty, Cotter Farms, Shrabble Cattle Co., RT Ranch, A&W Farms, Ozark Breeders Assoc., D&S Guttering, Backwoods Sharpening, Magnuson Recovery Serv., Still Bail Shop, Pampered Chef-S. Smith, Twice As Nice, Custom Appl., Graves Tree Serv., Kenville Painting Co., Mikes Taxidermy, Sweet Water Taxidermy, T&K Investments, Tammys Place, Johns Mower Serv., Lackland Home Serv., Hilltop Garage, Cozy Oaks Sales & Marketing, J&K Enterprises, Hilltop Real Estate, J&J Lawncare, Boatell, Divilbiss Dairy Co., Alph Baking Co.		Name VIOLA PO EAS Level 16 Miles Away 6.0 Window Service Hours: M-F 07:30 16:00 SAT 09:00 11:00 Lobby Hours: M-F 24 hrs SAT 24 hrs PO Boxes Available: 66																										
21. Prepared by																												
Printed Name and Title JACKIE STUBITSCH		Signature JACKIE STUBITSCH		Telephone No. AC () (501) 228-4171																								
PO Discontinuance Coordinator Name JACKIE STUBITSCH		Location LITTLE ROCK, AR																										

To complicate the process more and much to our surprise on Sept 8, 2011 this is what the Gepp Post Office patrons found when they arrived at the post office to pick up their mail. The door was locked and the windows were covered with cardboard. An "Emergency Suspension" notice was taped to the door.





This did not conform with Due Process!

This is the notice that the patrons received from the postal service several days later. We do not believe that this is correct information after reading the letter to the editor that was in the Baxter Bulletin that is on the next page.



STUDY COORDINATOR
OPERATIONS PROGRAMS SUPPORT
420 NATURAL RESOURCES DR
LITTLE ROCK AR 72205-9321

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S.P.S.
PERMIT NO. G-10

EMERGENCY SUSPENSION NOTICE

An Emergency Suspension of operations has been initiated on Gepp Post Office. The Postmaster Relief (PMR) has decided not to continue her employment with the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). PMR positions are for non-career employees hired for a term not-to-exceed 360 calendar days, followed by a five day break in service. A PMR reappointment was offered but again the PMR decided not to continue her employment with the USPS. Unable to find a replacement, a suspension of operations at the Gepp was necessary.

POSTAL CUSTOMER

While the office is suspended, PO Box service will be available from the Viola Post Office located 6 miles from the Gepp office at 9971 Highway 62 W. Customers presently receiving rural delivery will not experience a change in service, with the exception of picking up parcels and accountable mail at the Viola office. Customers currently using Gepp in the last line of their mailing address will continue to Gepp, AR 72538.

Retail Service will be available from the Viola Post Office. Window service hours at Viola are from 7:30 – 12noon / 1:00-4:00pm Monday – Friday, and 9:00-11:00am on Saturdays.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Viola Post Office at (870) 458-2204.

Letter to the Editor: Gepp postal worker offers her story

From Karen Shrable,

Gepp:

The Emergency Suspension Notice that was mailed out to Gepp postal customers the week of Sept. 15 contained information that was outright false. The study coordinator stated in the notice that the operations at Gepp Post Office were suspended because I decided not to continue my employment with the U.S.P.S. and they could not find a replacement.

The post office did not close because I resigned. The manager of Post Office operations arrived at Gepp Post Office the morning of Sept. 8 and told me that the office was being suspended. No warning to myself or the patrons of the post office. Post office boxes were tore out of the wall, and the doors were locked.

I was offered a transfer to a neighboring office. My job would be two hours on Saturday and a floater as needed at other small offices within a 50-mile radius. At the time, I had been working 30-plus hours. I did not resign until four days after the closure of Gepp Post Office. I want the residents of Gepp Post Office to know the truth.

We, Kathy Adams and Mary Rivera have noticed a large decline in the volume of mail we have been receiving since the emergency shutdown of the Gepp facility. Both of us received letters from the "POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION" that had been stamped "Return to Sender". That makes us believe that some of our mail is in fact being returned to senders! And is this happening to other Gepp postal patrons?



U.S. POSTAL
REGULATORY
COMMISSION

ew York Avenue NW, Suite 200
ashington, DC 20268-0001

RETURN TO SENDER

REASON CHECKED

☒ Moved, Left No Address

☐ Unable To Forward

☐ Attempted, Not Known

☐ Unclaimed

☐ No Such Street

☒ Insufficient Address

☐ Refused

☐ No Such Number

Mary Rivera, Chairman
Committee to Save Gepp Post Office
P.O. Box 37
Gepp, AR 72538



US OFFICIAL MAIL >> PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

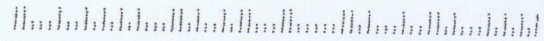
PITNEY BOWES

ZIP 20268 \$ 000.84⁰

02 1W

0004886931 SEP 16 2011

7253800037 B001



U.S. POSTAL
REGULATORY
COMMISSION

ew York Avenue NW, Suite 200
ashington, DC 20268-0001

RETURN TO SENDER

REASON CHECKED

☒ Moved, Left No Address

☐ Unable To Forward

☐ Attempted, Not Known

☐ Unclaimed

☐ No Such Street

☒ Insufficient Address

☐ Refused

☐ No Such Number

Kathy Adams
P.O. Box 96
Gepp, AR 72538



US OFFICIAL MAIL >> PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

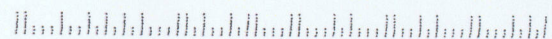
PITNEY BOWES

ZIP 20268 \$ 000.84

02 1W

0004886931

7253800096 B001



Gepp Post Office closed with no warning

Postal Service cites "emergency situation"

Richard Irby
Staff Writer

The Gepp Post Office, in northwestern Fulton County, was closed on Friday, Sept. 9, with no advance notice.

Residents who arrived to check their post office boxes were surprised to find the post office door locked and cardboard covering the windows and door.

A notice taped to the door said: "EMERGENCY SUSPENSION. GEPP POST OFFICE, 72538, EFFECTIVE 9-8-2011. Suspended Until Further Notice. PO Box customers can pick up their mail at the Viola Post Office which is located 7 miles east on Hwy. 62."

See Gepp Page 19A



Photo by Richard Irby

A Gepp resident tries the locked door, even though a posted notice explains the Gepp Post Office has been closed by an "emergency." Gepp residents have filed an appeal in a continuing effort to remove the post office from a closure list. Residents involved in the appeal claim the "emergency," the inability to find a temporary employee to fill in for the woman who runs the post office, is bogus.

Gepp

Continued from Front Page

"I know we are still appealing to keep it open," said one customer, who tried the locked door despite the notice. "What's this emergency business?"

While "Suspended Until Further Notice" raises hopes for a temporary closure, one citizen, who passed the post office on Thursday night, Sept. 8, could see that post office boxes had been removed from the walls in the lobby.

"The Gepp Post Office is being ripped apart," the woman said.

On Friday, Sept. 9, bags of trash had been set outside the office door, and people could be heard inside, apparently packing up.

The News contacted Lisa Tolliver-Gaye, the U.S. Postal Service Customer Service Coordinator in Little Rock, regarding the Gepp closure.

"We have closed the Gepp post office because of an emergency situation. The officer in charge must take a mandatory five day break, and we cannot find a replacement for her," said Tolliver-Gaye.

Tolliver-Gaye explained the Gepp Post Office does not have a

postmaster. Instead, it employs an officer in charge (Karen Shrable), who is not a career employee with benefits, and is required to periodically take days off.

Will the post office reopen after Shrable's five day break?

"No," replied the post office spokeswoman. "The post office is on the closing list and, with no replacement for the officer in charge, we have closed it permanently."

Tolliver-Gaye was then asked how the post office can be closed, since Gepp residents recently filed an appeal of the Postal Regulatory Commission's recommendation to close the postal station. The appeal is part of an official process that must be followed before individual post offices can be closed.

She replied she was not aware citizens had an appeal pending, and she would check on the situation.

In a later call, Tolliver-Gaye amended her earlier statement to *The News*.

"Since we cannot find a replacement for the officer in charge and we cannot interrupt service, we have moved the post office boxes (to Viola), until a replacement is found or a determination of closure is made," said Tolliver-Gaye.

According to the spokeswoman, the man-

ager over the Gepp post office has tried to find a temporary replacement for the officer in charge, but no one wants to take the position because the office is in such a "remote" location.

"We did all we could, but I think they found a loophole and took it," said Gepp resident Ethel Morris, who has been active in the effort to save the post office.

According to Morris, Shrable, who runs the post office, has frequently taken time off in the past, and there has been no problem finding a temporary replacement to work for her.

"We filed our appeal (of the closure decision) with time to spare," said Morris. "We have tried to follow the rules and they have done us dirty."

Morris and others who have worked to keep the post office open are aware a post office can be closed under an emergency order, if the facility is unsafe and poses a danger to customers or employees.

Morris said she had never heard that an "emergency" could include problems finding replacement workers when regular employees are off.

The Gepp Post Office was one of the first rural Arkansas post offices listed for closure, early this year.

At a public meeting in March, more than 60 Gepp

residents filled the volunteer fire department to argue their post office is needed and well used by an elderly population.

A post office spokesman told them they had the right to petition to keep their post office open, but "drastic cuts" in service had to be made, because the postal service lost \$8.5 billion dollars in 2010 and was running out of money.

In August, the postal service expanded its closure list to nearly 3,700 post offices.

Besides Gepp, post offices in Sturkie, Camp, Elizabeth, Wiseman, Violet Hill, Guion, Dolph, Sidney and Ravenden Spring, in our area, are listed for closure.

While Sturkey residents recently held a meeting to plan a fight to save their post office, some communities appear resigned to the idea small post offices are going to be closed, no matter how much citizens object.

"We've got to go to Viola, I guess," said a Gepp citizen who stopped to pick up his mail and found the post office closed.

What did he think about the seven mile trip to Viola to collect his mail?

"I don't think much of it," the man replied. "That's progress, I guess."